

Fun Facts: American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month



The Start of American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) Heritage Month

The first American Indian Day was celebrated in May 1916 in New York. Red Fox James, a member of the Blackfeet Nation, rode horseback from state to state to get endorsements from 24 state governments to have a day to honor American Indians. In 1990, President George H.W. Bush signed a joint congressional resolution designating November 1990 as "National American Indian Heritage Month." Similar proclamations have been issued every year since 1994, and we now refer to this celebration as "American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month."

What's the Age?

Roughly 32 – Median age of the American Indian and Alaska Native population in 2021.

Educational Attainment

Of American Indian and Alaska Natives 25 years and over, approximately...

- **16%** have less than a high school diploma
- **27%** are high school graduates (includes equivalency)
- **34%** have some college or an associate's degree
- **15%** have a bachelor's degree
- **8%** have a graduate or professional degree



AIAN-Owned Businesses

0.45% or 26,064 businesses were owned by American Indian and Alaska Natives.
(This number only represents employer businesses.)

Some of the American Indian and Alaska Native-owned businesses were:

- Construction – **4,573**
- Professional, scientific, and technical services – **3,927**
(includes architectural, engineering and veterinary services)
- Healthcare and social assistance – **3,148**
(includes dentist and doctors' offices)
- Retail trade – **2,447**
(includes clothing, shoe, and book stores)
- Accommodation and food services – **1,798**



Total Population of AIAN Origin

2.2% or 7.2 million – The number of American Indian and Alaska Natives in the United States in 2021. These states have among the highest percentage of American Indian and Alaska Native residents:

20.5%
Alaska



14.4%
Oklahoma



Largest Tribal Groupings



574 – The number of federally recognized Indian tribes in 2022.

3 largest American Indian tribal groupings*

- Cherokee – **1,108,037**
- Navajo – **369,018**
- Choctaw – **238,303**

3 largest Alaska Native tribal groupings*

- Yup'ik – **41,879**
- Inupiat – **41,700**
- Tlingit-Haida – **27,910**

Tribal groupings refer to the combining of individual American Indian and Alaska Native tribes, such as combining Fort Sill Apache, Mescalero Apache, and San Carlos Apache, into the general Apache tribal grouping.

*2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Note: All of the data on this page, except the business data, is for AIAN alone or in combination with other races.

Sources: Vintage 2021 Population Estimates; Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2022; 2021 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-Year Estimates; 2011-2015 ACS, Selected Population Detailed Tables, 5-Year Estimates; 2019 Annual Business Survey.